Computer Guided Intervention for Weight Control

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Health Maintenance Organizations are looking at using computer assisted instruction for patient education as a method of reducing costs. There is a large body which addresses weight-control interventions and traditional education computer assisted instruction applications. We present a program which synthesizes this knowledge. The program maintains a model of each patient based on questionnaire information, usage history, and their success in achieving stated goals. It uses this model to guide the patient's selection of content and the guidance algorithm is in turn based on previous research specific to the weight-control domain.

The platform used to run the program was a Pentium with 8 megabytes of random access memory, One gigabyte of hard drive, a Soundblaster ™ card, and a Cardinal Snap Plus™ video card

The program covers three general topic areas: nutrition, physical fitness, and emotional issues related to weight. At the end of each session, the patient is asked to choose a set of goals to focus on over the coming week and the computer stores the participants choices. Upon reentry into the program, the user is asked to rate the success in accomplishing each goal.

Currently, the computer guided intervention is being used by 200 participants within an HMO setting.

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